

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MMO-01 SCA-01 SP-02 ABF-01 PER-01 SS-15
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-----111543Z 125117 /46

R 111306Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8998

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FROM CHARGE FOR AF/EX, MR. SALAZAR

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: AODE, MA

SUBJECT: RETENTION OF CONSULAR POSITION IN TANANARIVE

1. SUMMARY. IN ACCORDANCE WITH OUR TALK JUST BEFORE I LEFT WASHINGTON, I HAVE SINCE MY ARRIVAL CAREFULLY REVIEWED THE QUESTION OF OUR NEED FOR A CONSULAR OFFICER POSITION. I HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE ELIMINATION OF THIS SLOT AFTER THE PRESENT INCUMBENT'S DEPARTURE, NOW SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 12, WOULD SERIOUSLY AFFECT THIS POST'S ABILITY TO PERFORM AS EXPECTED IN SEVERAL FIELDS. PARAS 2 THROUGH 8 GIVE A DETAILED PICTURE OF THE INCUMBENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE ABSORBED BY THE REMAINING THREE STATE OFFICERS IF THIS POSITION WERE ELIMINATED. I BELIEVE THREE GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND, HOWEVER, AS THESE SPECIFICS ARE CONSIDERED:

(A) THE APPARENT CONSULAR WORKLOAD DOES NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE TIME TAKEN UP BY CONSULAR DUTIES. I AM SURE THAT IN THE COLD STATISTICS OF VISAS AND PASSPORTS ISSUED, THIS POST RANKS LOW, EVEN FOR AFRICA. BUT THE FACT THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN IMPORTANT AMERICAN OFFICIAL COMMUNITY HERE IN THE PAST MEANS THAT THERE ARE CONSULAR TASKS TO PERFORM AND EXTENSIVE FILES TO MAINTAIN RESULTING FROM THAT PERIOD,
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WHICH WOULD NOT BE THE CASE IF THIS MISSION AND THE OFFICIAL AMERICAN COMMUNITY HERE HAD ALWAYS BEEN AS SMALL AS THEY ARE NOW. FURTHERMORE, PROPER PERFORMANCE OF THE PROTECTION AND PASSPORT FUNCTIONS, AS DETAILED BELOW, ARE PROBABLY MORE TIME CONSUMING HERE THAN IN MANY OTHER POSTS. AND LASTLY, NO MATTER WHAT THE WORKLOAD, IT STILL TAKES THE SAME AMOUNT OF TIME FOR ANY CONSULAR OFFICER TO KEEP UP

WITH THE CONSTANTLY CHANGING PROCEDURES AND REGULATIONS
COMING OUT OF WASHINGTON.

(B) A MISSION WHICH HAS BEEN NUMERICALLY REDUCED HAS A
GREAT DEAL OF RESIDUAL WORK IN ALL FIELDS, WHICH IS NOT
THE CASE FOR A POST WHICH HAS ALWAYS BEEN SMALL. IN THE
CASE OF TANANARIVE, THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY
REDUCED AND THE NASA STATION CLOSED DOWN. BOTH THE ELINI-
NATED EMBASSY COMPONENTS AND THE NASA STATION LEFT BEHIND
CONSIDERABLE RESIDUAL WORK NOW PERFORMED BY BOTH THE
CONSULAR OFFICER AND THE OTHER STATE OFFICERS WHO WOULD
BE EXPECTED TO ABSORB THE CONSULAR FUNCTIONS. THIS IS NOT
THE CASE FOR POSTS WHICH STARTED OUT SMALL AND REMAINED SO.

(C) PROJECTED PERSONNEL STRENGTHS MUST BE CONSIDERED.
AS DEPT. WELL AWARE, THIS POST NOT PRESENTLY FULLY MANNED
AND MAY NOT BE FOR SOME TIME. SOME OFFICERS ALREADY DOING
DOUBLE DUTY, AND ELIMINATION OF ANOTHER OFFICER SLOT
WOULD COMPOUND THE PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

2. ALTHOUGH THE CONSULAR DUTIES IN TANANARIVE DO NOT
CONSTITUTE A FULL-TIME WORKLOAD, THE CONOFF PERFORMS A
NUMBER OF OTHER FUNCTIONS WHICH ARE SET FORTH BELOW.
FIRST, HOWEVER, SOME COMMENTS ARE IN ORDER ON THE VARIOUS
ACTIVITIES THE CONOFF PERFORMS IN THE CONSULAR SPECIALTY.

(A) PROTECTION AND WELFARE. SINCE THE PRESENT CONOFF'S
ARRIVAL IN TANANARIVE JUNE 16, 1975, HE HAS HAD SEVEN
MAJOR PROTECTION AND WELFARE CASES, THE MOST SERIOUS OF
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WHICH HE IS CURRENTLY HANDLING. THIS CASE, INVOLVING AN
IMPRISONED AMERICAN, BEGAN JANUARY 18, 1977, AND THREATENS
TO CONTINUE FOR SEVERAL MORE MONTHS, IF NOT YEARS. ARREST
CASES ARE PARTICULARLY TIME CONSUMING IN MADAGASCAR BECAUSE
OF THE CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF RED TAPE IMPOSED BY MALAGASY
AUTHORITIES. JUST GAINING ACCESS TO A DETAINEE GENERALLY
TAKES SEVERAL DAYS OF CONCERTED EFFORT.

(B) PASSPORTS AND CITIZENSHIP. ISSUING PASSPORTS AND
PERFORMING OTHER CONSULAR SERVICES FOR THE APPROXIMATELY 200
AMERICANS LIVING IN MADAGASCAR IS ANOTHER OF CONOFF'S
MAJOR CONSULAR DUTIES. THE MAJORITY OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNI-
TY IN MADAGASCAR ARE MISSIONARIES AND THEIR FAMILIES, WHO,
FOR THE MOST PART, LIVE IN OUTLYING AREAS OF THIS COUNTRY,
WHICH IS VERY LARGE BUT CHARACTERIZED BY POOR COMMUNICATIONS.
THUS, PROVIDING CONSULAR SERVICES TO THEM REQUIRES A GOOD
DEAL OF CORRESPONDENCE AS OPPOSED TO DIRECT PERSONAL
CONTACT.

(C) VISAS. THE CONOFF'S VISA WORKLOAD IS SLIGHTLY LESS THAN ONE NON-IMMIGRANT VISA PER DAY AND ABOUT SEVEN IMMIGRANT VISAS PER YEAR.

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(D) VOTING. THE CONOFF IS, IN ADDITION, VOTING OFFICER, AND WITH THE NEW EMPHASIS ON AMCITS OVERSEAS VOTING IN AMERICAN ELECTIONS, HIS RESPONSIBILITIES IN THIS AREA WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE, AS THEY DID FOR THE RECENT NATIONAL ELECTION.

(E) MAINTAINING/ACQUIRING EXPERTISE. THE EMBASSY RECEIVES NUMEROUS AIRGRAMS AND TELEGRAMS WEEKLY ON CONSULAR AFFAIRS, OF WHICH CONOFF MUST KEEP ABREAST.

3. IN HIS ROLE AS LABOR REPORTING OFFICER, CONOFF MAINTAINS CONTACT WITH A NUMBER OF LOCAL LABOR LEADERS AND REPORTS TO DEPT ON LABOR DEVELOPMENTS IN MADAGASCAR. THIS INCLUDES RESPONSES TO DEPT REQUESTS IN THE LABOR FIELD. IN GENERAL, LABOR UNIONS IN MADAGASCAR ARE CLOSELY TIED TO POLITICAL PARTIES, AND BECAUSE OF THE RAPIDLY CHANGING POLITICAL CLIMATE WE CONCUR WITH DEPT THAT EMBASSY SHOULD CONTINUE TO REPORT ON LABOR AFFAIRS. (STATE 053850). THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE NOW THAT A NEW, GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED LABOR UNION HAS RECENTLY BEEN ESTABLISHED.

4. IN ANOTHER AREA, THAT OF POPULATION AFFAIRS, THE CONOFF HAS A VERY CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LOCAL FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION (FPA) AND WITH A HIGH RANKING ADVISOR IN THE MINISTRY OF POPULATION. THE MADAGASCAR
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GOVERNMENT IS TAKING A NEW-FOUND INTEREST IN POPULATION MATTERS AND HAS ASKED THE EMBASSY TO SUPPLY PUBLICATIONS IN THIS IMPORTANT FIELD. THERE PROMISES TO BE INCREASED ACTIVITY IN POPULATION AFFAIRS IN MADAGASCAR IN THE MONTHS AND YEARS TO COME. DEPT HAS EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN POPULATION MATTERS IN MADAGASCAR AND, IN FACT, AID INDIRECTLY FUNDS A PART OF THE LOCAL FPA'S ACTIVITIES HERE.

5. ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT AREA IN WHICH CONOFF IS INVOLVED IS THAT OF SCIENCE. HE IS SCIENCE OFFICER AND MAINTAINS CONTACTS WITH BOTH THE MINISTER AND SEC-GEN AT MINISTRY OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, AS WELL AS WITH OTHER MALAGASY SCIENTISTS. HE IS CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN UPCOMING VISIT BY TWO SCIENTISTS FROM ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION TO CARRY OUT POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT RESEARCH WITH MALAGASY SCIENTISTS ON POSSIBILITY THAT PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN, SUPER HEAVY CHEMICAL ELEMENTS MAY OCCUR IN THEIR NATURAL STATE IN MADAGASCAR. CONOFF ALSO DEALS WITH OBSERVATORY AT UNIVERSITY OF MADAGASCAR, WHICH ACTIVELY COOPERATES WITH U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY IN SEISMIC MEASURES AND WITH SOME U.S. MILITARY RESEARCH AGENCIES IN RECORDING REFLECTIONS OF "VERY LOW FREQUENCY" SIGNALS OFF THE IONOSPHERE. CONOFF OCCASIONALLY RECEIVES EQUIPMENT FOR TRANSMITTAL TO OBSERVATORY AND TRANSMITS MESSAGES TO AND FROM STATESIDE COORDINATOR FOR EXPERIMENTS. COMMENT: THIS SCIENTIFIC FUNCTION MAY TURN OUT TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT PERFORMED BY THIS POSITION. THE MALAGASY GOVERNMENT HAS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN POSSIBILITY OF A SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S, WHICH, IF CONCLUDED, COULD PRODUCE GREATER BENEFITS FOR THE U.S. THAN FOR THE HOST GOVT, GIVEN MADAGASCAR'S UNIQUE ATTRIBUTES. END COMMENT.

6. IN ADDITION, CONOFF IS PUBLICATIONS PROCUREMENT OFFICER, RESPONSIBLE FOR SENDING NUMEROUS PUBLICATIONS AND MAPS TO DEPT. HE IS ALSO POST BIOGRAPHIC REPORTING OFFICER.

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7. WITH THEIR OTHER DUTIES, IT IS HIGHLY DOUBTFUL THAT THE ECON/COMMERCIAL OFFICER, WHO ALSO SERVES AS ACTING DCM WITH SOME POLITICAL REPORTING DUTIES, AND THE ADMIN OFFICER, WHO SUPERVISES 7 AMERICAN AND 23 FSL EMPLOYEES AND LOOKS AFTER ALL RESIDUAL NASA AFFAIRS, CAN PROPERLY PERFORM CONSULAR FUNCTION AND ANCILLARY AREAS IN THE ABSENCE OF A CONOFF. MOREOVER, WITH NO AMBASSADOR, THE

EMBASSY STAFF IS ALREADY CURTAILED, AND TO REDUCE THE STAFF BY ANOTHER PERSON WILD NOT ALLOW US THE FLEXIBILITY WE NEED. FOR EXAMPLE, TWICE FOR A TOTAL OF EIGHT WEEKS, CONOFF SERVED AS ACTING ADMIN OFFICER--ONCE AS A RESULT OF THE EXPULSION OF THE ADMIN OFFICER.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: FOR THE REASONS SET FORTH ABOVE, I BELIEVE TANANARIVE NEEDS THE SERVICES OF A CONSULAR OFFICER, AND REQUEST DEPARTMENT RECONSIDER ITS DECISION TO DROP THE POSITION. CONOFF IS SCHEDULES TO DEPART POST APRIL 12, AND IN HIS ABSENCE I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A ROVING CONOFF TO FILL INWHILE AWAITING REPLACEMENT. PLEASE ADVISE.BARRETT

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